

Durham Community Business College for Technology and Enterprise

Bracken Court, Ushaw Moor, Durham, DH7 7NG

Inspection dates 17–18 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Sixth form provision		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Leadership is in a state of turmoil and not enough attention is given to making sure students achieve as well as they should.
- Morale is low and many staff believe the college is not led well.
- Leaders at all levels, including middle leaders, have an inaccurate view of how well students are progressing. Performance data collected by leaders are not accurate enough. This limits the capacity of the college to drive forward necessary improvements rapidly.
- Teaching over time is inadequate. It is not strong enough to ensure that all students achieve well.
- Achievement is inadequate and has been in decline for some years. The proportion of students gaining five good GCSEs, including English and mathematics, is consistently lower than the national average.
- Too many students, including the most able and those supported by the pupil premium, do not make sufficient progress from their starting points.
- The sixth form is inadequate because too many students underachieve or do not complete their studies.
- There is a lack of clear vision as to what the purpose of the sixth form is and many teachers lack the skills to teach post-16 courses.

The school has the following strengths

- Students are well cared for and feel safe.
- Parents acknowledge that their children feel safe and are well looked after.
- Behaviour at social times is usually orderly and calm and students are supervised well.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at no notice under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. It was subsequently deemed a section 5 inspection due to the extent of concerns surrounding a decline in standards and the quality of leadership and management.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 19 lessons and parts of lessons. Lessons were observed in a range of subjects and across year groups.
- During lesson observations, inspectors reviewed work in students' books. They also observed students' behaviour between lessons, inside and outside of the college buildings.
- There were nine other classroom visits to observe marking and feedback and the activities that students experienced during the collapsed timetable day.
- Two inspectors visited the inclusion room.
- Meetings were held with the acting principal, members of the senior leadership team, groups of staff, students, two local authority representatives and five members of the governing body.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to 38 staff questionnaires. There were too few responses to the on-line questionnaire for parents (Parent View), but inspectors considered the responses to the college's own survey of parents' views.
- The inspection team examined a number of documents, including the college's own data on students' progress, behaviour and safeguarding, the college's own evaluation of its performance, the college improvement plan, subject improvement plans and evaluations and minutes from governors' meetings.
- Inspectors were aware during this inspection that serious allegations against a member of staff not relating to this school were being investigated by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate allegations of this kind, actions taken by this setting in response to the allegations were considered alongside the other evidence available at the time to inform inspectors' judgements.

Inspection team

Phil Smith, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Ann Muxworthy	Additional Inspector
Anthony Nicholson	Additional Inspector
Darren Stewart	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the section 44 of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- The college is a smaller-than-average-sized secondary school.
- The college has been federated with a nearby secondary school since 2005. Together they form the Durham Federation.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students who are supported by the pupil premium funding is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language or who are from minority ethnic backgrounds is much lower than the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is above the national average. The proportion of these supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is higher than the national average.
- There has been significant change to leadership over the last two years. The chief executive of the college has been suspended 'without prejudice' from her post since December 2012. A Principal has had oversight over the two colleges with a senior leader taking responsibility for the day-to-day work of each college.
- The college meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The college does not use any alternative provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Urgently improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good in order to raise achievement, especially in mathematics, science and the sixth form by ensuring that:
 - the progress made by different groups of students is accurately and regularly checked
 - students' work is accurately assessed and new work enables all groups of students to make rapid progress
 - teachers demand consistently high standards of work from their students
 - all marking and feedback gives helpful guidance by showing students precisely what they must do to improve their work and ensuring they act upon this advice quickly.
- Urgently improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, so that improvement is driven forward rapidly by:
 - ensuring that senior leaders are capable of delivering improvement priorities
 - establishing robust systems to check and evaluate the college's work accurately and ensuring that the outcomes are used consistently by all senior and middle leaders and managers to make rapid improvements
 - ensuring that leaders' judgements about the quality of teaching give high regard to the standards of students' work over time and published performance data on progress and attainment
 - checking that students who are supported by the government's pupil premium funding receive high calibre support that accelerates their progress
 - ensuring that the governing body holds the senior leaders and managers to account for all aspects of the college's performance.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and

management may be improved.

An external review of the college's use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- The college is operating in a state of turmoil and uncertainty. Leaders at all levels, including governors, have taken their eye off making sure students fulfil their potential. Consequently, students' achievement is inadequate and is declining year on year. Staff morale is low; many staff do not believe the college is led well. There are few signs of improvement on the horizon.
- Systems for checking the work of the college are inaccurate and do not reflect the reality of long-term decline in achievement. Leaders and teachers do not have accurate and credible view of performance data. They have a poor track record for predicting accurately how well students will do, even when there are only weeks to go before their final examinations.
- Leaders and managers do not demonstrate the capacity to secure improvements. Plans for improvement over time are weak, because they are often based on wholly inaccurate judgements as to how well departments are performing. Consequently, the college does not have a clear idea of the urgency needed to improve achievement.
- Measures to judge the success of planned actions do not focus enough on whether they will improve the quality of teaching and students' achievement. This contributes to leaders' unclear understanding of how well the college is doing.
- Despite evidence to the contrary, too many middle leaders believe they lead good or outstanding departments. Yet, in many instances, achievement, teaching and leadership are inadequate. These leaders do not ensure consistently high expectations in their department. They do not check well enough on the quality of teaching and of students' work, including making sure that work is marked to a consistently high standard. They are too easily convinced that all is well. Senior leaders, in turn, have been ineffective in tackling these issues.
- The leadership of teaching is inadequate. Too many teachers are focused on 'performing' during pre-arranged lesson observations, rather than ensuring high quality teaching over time leads to improved student outcomes. College leaders believe that teaching is far stronger than it actually is.
- Systems for managing the performance of teachers are not effective. Targets are not sharp enough to hold staff to account for students' performance or to drive up the quality of teaching and learning. The link between salary progression and students' achievement is weak.
- The curriculum is ineffective in raising achievement. It does not enable students to make sufficient progress in developing their numeracy skills to be well prepared for education, employment or training.
- The promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development requires improvement. Some students take advantage of the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme or become student ambassadors and show an awareness of right and wrong. There are displays around the college raising cultural awareness of life in other countries, but students do not have a good grasp of other religions and faiths and are not clear enough about some of the features of modern Britain, such as democracy.
- Older students in Key Stages 4 and 5 valued the careers guidance they had been given. These students were clearer as to what they needed to do in order to progress to the next steps in education, training or employment.
- The college may not appoint newly qualified teachers.
- The local authority has acted rapidly in response to serious allegations at senior leadership level. They have not been as quick or as effective in intervening and tackling issues related to teaching and learning or weak leadership elsewhere in the college.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body does not have the necessary knowledge and skills to hold leaders and managers robustly to account for the decline in the college's performance, students' poor outcomes and weak teaching.
 - Governors believe that students 'achieved to the best of their abilities'. This is far from the case and many students could achieve much more. Governors lack the necessary understanding to analyse in sufficient detail information about students' progress to enable them to challenge senior leaders accordingly.

- Governors are not fulfilling their statutory duties in ensuring that additional funding is well spent. While governors have some awareness of how the pupil premium funding is spent, they have not evaluated the impact of this spending on the progress of the students concerned. Governors were shocked to find the extent to which gaps have continued to grow for disadvantaged students. Governors do not know how the Year 7 catch-up funding was or is being used, nor the impact it is having. The monitoring of the impact of additional funding is inadequate.
- Governors have not ensured that leaders' and teachers' pay awards have been linked well enough to their performance.
- Governors have not ensured that the website, which contains policies for parents, is kept up to date. For example, the home-school agreement is from 2011 and a number of equality policies have not been reviewed or updated in a timely fashion.
- Governors ensure that the college's systems for safeguarding students meet statutory requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. Students are compliant in lessons and usually do as they are told. They generally move calmly and sensibly around the college sites and respect their environment. At the end of break times and lunchtimes, students usually put litter in the bins provided. College uniform rules are followed, but boys can have a tendency to wear their ties in an untidy way, despite reminders from teachers. Some students are courteous and open doors for visitors.
- Students do not always demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. They do not routinely take the opportunity to work as hard as they could in lessons and can become easily distracted and start talking and disturbing others around them. This slows their progress and that of others. Some can be reluctant to respond to teachers' questioning and appear lethargic or bored. They can lose interest in the lesson and swing on their chairs.
- Staff surveys express the opinion that behaviour is not yet good.
- Attendance levels have improved and are now broadly average. Persistent absence rates are falling, but currently remain above average. Students are usually punctual to lessons. The proportion of fixed-term exclusions has increased recently, as the college wants to stamp out the abusive language that is being used by some students, reflecting a more rigorous approach to addressing the poorer behaviour of some students. The inclusion suite is used appropriately to support some students in improving the management of their behaviour.
- The college's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students, staff and parents believe that staff keep children safe and they are well cared for. Students are supervised well during break times and throughout the day. Students report how they feel part of the college community. They feel confident in raising any concerns they may have with teachers and other adults. Incidents of bullying, which are low, are tackled effectively. There are no reported instances of homophobic or cyber-bullying. Students have a good awareness of potential risks to their health and safety, including e-safety.
- The single central record is maintained well and up-to-date. Safer recruitment and staff induction procedures are embedded well. Child protection cases are usually recorded clearly, but there are some instances when greater detail and evaluation would make records more comprehensive.
- Staff receive regular training on safeguarding and spotting signs of potential risk to students. They are confident in knowing who they can report their concerns to but some are less clear about recent guidance on how to make a direct referral.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Teaching over time is inadequate because it does not ensure that all students have an equal chance of success and achieve well over time. Too little progress is made by students, especially those supported by the pupil premium and the most able. There is not enough good teaching to improve students' achievement rapidly. As one student told inspectors, 'it depends on who you get.'
- Teachers' expectations are too variable. Some demonstrate high expectations for students. For example, in a Year 7 art lesson, the teacher engaged students in an interesting and challenging discussion on the use of different textures that could be used in their work and discussed helpful ways as to how they could improve.
- In many lessons too little attention is paid to the learning needs of different groups of pupils. For some

students the work is too easy and for others it is too hard. Student assessment information is not secure, so even where it is used to inform lesson planning, it has limited impact.

- Analysis of students' work shows that teaching has too little impact on learning over time. Expectations of the quality of presentation of students' work are often too low and the presentation of work is highly variable, both within and between departments. For example, in science, rulers are not used consistently to underline dates and titles, diagrams are inaccurately drawn and writing is often scruffy and lacks care or a sense of pride.
- Literacy skills are not reinforced sufficiently well to support and accelerate progress across the wider curriculum. The marking policy requires teachers to ensure that students correct their spellings three times. Many teachers are not following this and so spelling errors are not being tackled successfully.
- Students are not challenged enough to improve their progress. Sometimes teachers provide detailed points for students to act upon and then fail to check that these improvements have been made. At other times, teachers simply tick work and provide little or no feedback to students. This means they are often unsure how to improve and consequently make slow progress.
- Weekly professional development sessions for teachers have been ineffective in ensuring that the use of questioning in lessons is of consistently high quality. Some teachers are capable of challenging students with well-framed questions that really encourage them to think and deepen their understanding. However, too often, teachers answer student questions themselves.
- Homework is not used well to help students make faster progress. Students reported to inspectors that homework is often about finishing off work that was not completed in the lesson.
- Some additional adults contribute well to students' learning and development, especially those with special educational needs. They help students to remain focused and on task and this helps them to progress.

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Achievement is inadequate and continues to decline. Students enter and leave the college with standards that are well below average; consequently, they are making inadequate progress. At the root of the problem is too much weak teaching and leadership. Leaders have not tackled these shortcomings and allowed staff to have overinflated views of their performance.
- College leaders agree that achievement is inadequate in a number of subjects, including mathematics and science. They accept that they are 'not bringing home the outcomes that we should be.' They have been ineffective in getting some middle leaders to appreciate the importance of accelerating student progress, as well as raising attainment.
- In both 2013 and 2014, the proportion of students gaining five good grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, was significantly below the national average. Too many students, especially boys, failed to make the progress expected of them and, consequently, were poorly equipped for the next phase of their education.
- When the college has entered students for GCSE examinations in mathematics before Year 11, this has not had a positive enough impact on student outcomes, particularly for the most able.
- College leaders have been ineffective in closing the gaps between disadvantaged students supported by the pupil premium funding and others. There are wide and growing gaps between the performances of different groups of students. Students supported by the pupil premium make inadequate progress. In mathematics, the numbers making expected progress has declined year-on-year since 2011, with no signs of improvement.
- For disadvantaged students, therefore, attainment gaps compared to other students nationally are half a GCSE grade lower in English and one and a half grades lower in mathematics and are not narrowing enough over time. In college, disadvantaged students attain GCSE results that are half a grade lower than other students in English and nearly three quarters of a grade lower in mathematics. There are no convincing signs of improvement.
- As with other students, the most-able students underachieve over time because their progress is not checked accurately and the work they are given is not matched closely enough to their needs. While they make expected progress in English, few make better than expected progress in either English or mathematics. The most-able students do not achieve the A* to A grades they are capable of at GCSE in a wide range of subjects.
- The achievement of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is mixed. These students generally make expected progress in English, but inadequate progress in other subjects, including mathematics and science.
- The college's own data on students' progress is inaccurate and unreliable across much of the college.

Leaders have generally been wide of the mark when predicting how well students will achieve. There is little evidence that additional funding, such as the pupil premium or Year 7 catch-up funding, has had any significant impact.

- The collapsed timetable days are intended to enhance the curriculum for students. There are many of them throughout the year and in their current form they are not a good use of valuable teaching time. In practice, they are a missed opportunity to tackle key weaknesses in students' learning, such as literacy and numeracy skills. They are not coordinated well and so their quality is too variable and too often students make little or no progress.

The sixth form provision

is inadequate

- Achievement in the sixth form is inadequate. Although a small cohort of students studying vocational qualifications reached the 16 to 19 minimum standards in 2014, those studying academic pathways did not. AS results in 2014 were poor. Too many students, including the most able, underachieved and were often some way off their targets. There is not a culture of high expectations or the genuine pursuit of scholastic excellence.
- Students who had failed to achieve a GCSE grade C in English and/or mathematics in Year 11 did not succeed in achieving this during their time in the sixth form. Out of six students who re-sat a GCSE in mathematics, five of them went on to achieve much lower grades than they did in Year 11.
- The quality of teaching is inadequate. Teaching often lacks challenge. Leaders acknowledge that teachers need further training in order to deliver high quality post-16 education. Much of the teaching over time has not allowed students to achieve their potential. As a result, some students demonstrate poor attitudes to learning and this has also led to poor rates of attendance.
- Marking and feedback to students gives too little attention to what needs to improve or how this can be done. Students are unsure how their achievement and progress are checked.
- Retention rates in Year 12 and 13 are poor. Too many students do not complete their studies and leave.
- Leaders of the sixth form lack experience. While they show a good deal of enthusiasm and willingness to do well, this is not enough. There is a lack of vision as to the purpose of the sixth form. Leaders are unsure of whether to narrow the curriculum further by focusing on vocational qualifications or to continue to offer academic pathways. Many of the class sizes are very small and are not financially viable. The sixth form represents poor value for money.
- Students speak positively about the level of care teachers provide. They feel safe and know that bullying, including homophobic and racist bullying, will be dealt with effectively, should it occur.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	114311
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	444361

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	500
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	120
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Bell
Principal	Trevor Dunn
Date of previous school inspection	15 February 2011
Telephone number	0191 373 0336
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